

THE
Layman's LETTERS
TO THE
Dissenting Ministers
of LONDON;

WITH
A LIST of their NAMES
on Both Sides:

Consisting of
A Letter of THANKS to those
Divines who Subscribed the Declaration
for the TRINITY.

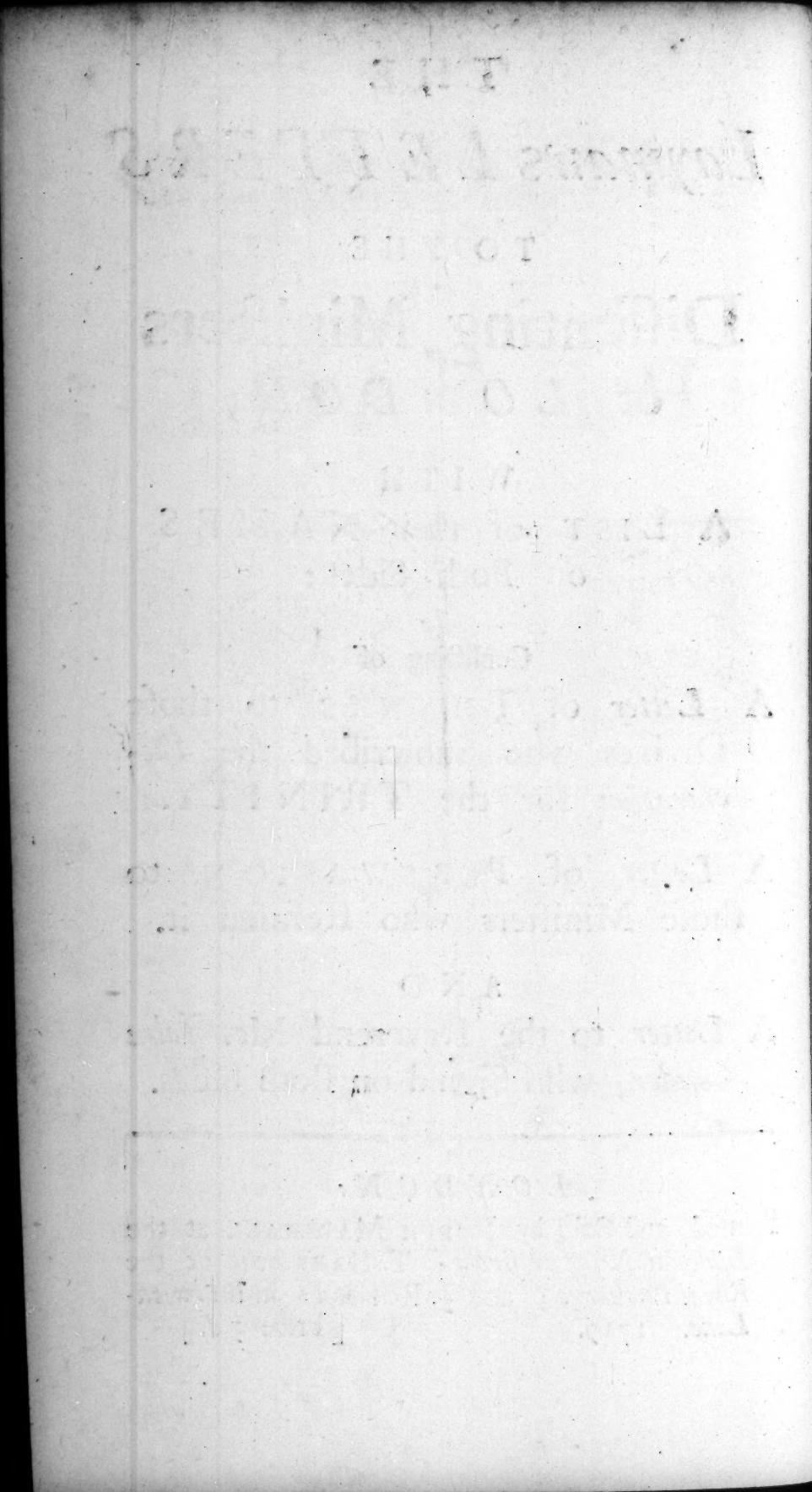
A Letter of PERSWASION to
those Ministers who Refused it.

AND

A Letter to the Reverend Mr. John
Conder, who Sign'd on Both Sides.

LONDON:

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THE P R E F A C E.



INCE the finishing these LETTERS, that I might secure my self from mistaking the Non-Subscribers in any Particular, I cast my Eye once more over what they have published in their Account of this important Affair; and lest they should pretend, that the Letter to the Brethren at Exeter, Subscrib'd by the Reverend Mr. Oldfield, D. D. might have been sufficient to have prevented all I have said against them, since there the proper Divinity of our Saviour and the Blessed Trinity are own'd in Words that are meerly Humane; which Letter is Subscrib'd in all their Names, by Mr. Oldfield, D. D. their Moderator. But this partial Compliance, this Use of two or three Words, meerly Humane, to notify or make known what they mean, adds new Force and Strength to what I have said in my Letter to them; for if they could depart from their Adherence, to the expressing themselves in no other Words but those of the Holy Scripture, in two or three Words they might have done it in the whole Declaration: But they did this, they say, to Notify the Things we speak of; and we do not presume, in the way

The P R E F A C E.

of Test, &c. But there is no more requir'd of them, in their Subscription to the Declaration, than to Notify the Thing of which they were desired to give their Belief. By Notify, I suppose, they mean, to let the Hearer or Reader know perfectly what is intended by the Words they make use of: If that be the Sense of Notify, they must give me leave to tell them, that these Unscriptural Words of Trinity and Proper Divinity, are not sufficient to notify that they do believe the Trinity in the Sense of the Declaration; for the word Trinity has various Senses, as that of the Modelists and Reallists, a meer nominal Sense, and a Sense which it implies, or that is mentioned in the Declaration: And in the same manner Proper Divinity may be taken in the Sense of the Trinitarians, or in that of the Arians or Socinians; for Socinus himself allowed Christ to be Deus factus, that is, a Made or Created God; but the Words of the Declaration leave us in none of these Doubts, so the Necessity of Subscribing of it still remains.

One Word or two more, and I have done; these Non-subscribers, in their Letter, plainly deny themselves to be Arians, but not one Word of Socinians, or any other of the Unitarian Faction; so that here, as well as elsewhere, they are resolved to leave us in the Dark.



T H E

THE
Layman's Letters
 TO THE
Dissenting Ministers
 of LONDON, &c.

A LETTER of THANKS to those
 Dissenting Ministers of London who
 Subscribed the Declaration for the
 TRINITY..

Reverend GENTLEMEN,

THE late unhappy Division which
 has happen'd betwixt our Teachers,
 and made such a Noise in the World,
 hath been the Occasion of much Joy
 to our Enemies, and too much Scan-
 dal to our Selves ; I mean, to us of
 the Laity, who cannot see these Divisions without
 a great deal of Pain and Confusion. I confess, that
 the honest Conduct, by which you, Gentlemen,

have directed your selves, in Subscribing, in such express Terms, to the Doctrine of the *Holy TRINITY*, has, in some measure, alleviated both our Pain and Confusion: I wish it were able entirely to remove that odious Obloquy, which, the Refusal of so great a Number, has given the Common Foe an Opportunity of fixing upon us.

I hope, that notwithstanding the Evil Appearance, which the Refusal of those Gentlemen who have denied to join with you in the *Subscription*, and the Triumph of the *Socinians, Arians, and others*, are without that Ground with which they flatter themselves, of having gain'd so strong a Party among the *Dissenters*; since the *Non-Subscribers* have own'd the Divinity of our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit.

I shall take the less Notice of their Measures in this Place, because I shall have Occasion to speak to them more particularly in the following Letter, where they come more directly under my Consideration; but this I must needs say in this place, that their Aversion to do the same which you have done, very much heightens our Obligations to you, in having that Regard to the Satisfaction of those who are committed to your Charge, as not to let any needless Scruple or Nicety deprive us of the Satisfaction which is not only due to us, but to all the Churches of Christ: We therefore, the Laity, think our selves obliged to return our most hearty Thanks unto you, not only for the Act it self, but for the Manner in which it was done, and the Endeavours you have since used, by Reason and Argument, and a true Brotherly Love, to prevail with them to quit that obstinate retention of what they had first done, and so satisfy the World, either in your Words, or Words chosen by themselves, that they do believe the *Trinity* in the same Sense which

which all known Trinitarians do, and not to adhere to Words which may be own'd even by an Arian himself, by help of a little Equivocation.

They have been pleased to call their's, *A Noble Stand for Liberty*; but, I am afraid, there is a manifest Abuse of the word *Liberty* in this place, and that it signifies; in their Sense, a License to let all Sects and Heresies into the very Administration of the Church: For if they will neither confess to let their Congregations know what their Opinions are in such express Words, Words of a certain and determinate Sense, nor allow that any other shall draw up for them any Declaration to the same Purpose, they may hold the most heterodox Opinions in the World, though never so destructive of Christianity it self, and the Congregations are in no way of getting rid of a Wolf in Sheep's cloathing: We must therefore Thank you who have discovered such a Readiness, such a Willingness, such an Alacrity in complying with the Desire, and removing the Doubts and Scruples of our distant Brethren of *Exon*, which discovers a truly Christian Concern for the Souls of those who are not directly under your Charge. You were not for neglecting the Surmises and Reports of the Enemies of the Christian Name, which had fix'd such a Scandal upon the Dissenting Teachers of *London*, as if they were almost all in the *Arian* Interest. The only Means of putting a Stop to this Reproach, was the Method you have taken, that is, by publickly Subscribing to such a *Declaration* as should sufficiently and eminently prove to the World, that you did really believe the *Blessed Trinity* in the same Sense of the Scripture which has been always given it by all the Protestant Congregations in the World: And it is amazing to me, that there should be so many found in your Reverend

riend Body, who are pleased to give too much ground of such Suspicion, that their Professions and Words are not sincere enough to be depended upon; and by consequence, that the Satisfaction of so many of the Laity, who depend on, and expect their Publick Assurance of being for the Holy Trinity, is not of Importance enough to engage their Consent.

But, Gentlemen, the greater Difficulty they make of doing this, the greater the Necessity is that it should be done; because it has made known, and spread those Doubts and Reproaches, which can only be removed by such a Declaration: And the more are our Obligations to you, who would have prevented all this Scandal, and have so much less'd it by what you have done.

This Obligation cannot be sufficiently paid, without our communicating, as often as we can, your Names to the World, which is the Reason that they are printed again at the End of this Letter. My Wishes and Prayers shall always be continued, that your pious Endeavours, and Zeal for the Christian Religion, may meet with suitable Success, especially that they may quickly bring over your mistaken Brethren to do what you have done. I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your humble Servant, &c.

Tuesday March 3. 1718-19.

The First Article of the Church of England.

Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

" **T**here is but One Living and True God,
 " Everlasting ; without Body, Parts, or
 " Passions ; Of Infinite Power, Wisdom, and
 " Goodness ; the Maker and Preserver of all
 " Things both Visible and Invisible : And in the
 " Unity of this Godhead, there be Three Per-
 " sons of One Substance, Power, and Eternity ;
 " the Father, the Son, and the *Holy Ghost*.

We do heartily Subscribe to that which is above
 express'd, as what we believe to be the Do-
 trine of the Blessed Trinity, reveal'd in the
 Holy Scriptures.

PASTORS in and about London.

William Lorimer, S. T. P.

Jer. Smith,
Samuel Pomfret,
W. Tong,
B. Robinson,
Tbo. Reynolds,
Tbo. Bradbury,
John Mortershead,
Joseph Hill,
Tbo. Harrison,

Daniel Wilcox,
John Newman,
Jaz. Earle,
Tbo. Loyd,
James Wood,
George Davy,
John Skepp,
John Foxon,
James Anderson,
John

Jahn Cummings,	John Nesbitt,
John Killinghall,	Robert Bragge,
James Galloway,	Matthew Clark,
J. Lewis,	Tbo. Ridgley,
Tbo. Dewhurst,	John Noble,
Isa. Bates,	John Afly,
John Sladen,	Edw. Wallin,
William Curtis,	Patrick Russel,
James Matthews,	Mark Key,
John Baker,	W. Chapman,
Zachary Merrill,	Samuel Harris,
John Beaumont,	Tho. Masters,
Francis Freeman,	Edward Ridgway,
Da. Rees,	Abraham Mulliner,
Tbo. Michell,	William Hocker sen.

PASTORS in the Country,

Daniel Mayo,	Lachlan Ross,
John Olive,	Richard Pain,
John Sharpe,	John Foster,
William Bushnel,	Samuel Bourne,
Stephen Crisp,	George Burnest,
Peter Goodwin,	

PREACHERS Ordained or Licensed.

Herman Hood,	James Wildman,
John Conder,	Peter Bradbury,
James Gillespy,	John Mitchel,
William Mc.Clatchy,	Thomas Charlton,
Ph Gibbs,	Henry Francis,
John Hubbard,	Joseph Tate,
William Benson,	Richard Glover,
Merriman Norris,	Emanuel Ellerker,
John Toms,	Joseph Matthews.

Tuesday

Tuesday March 3. 1718-19.

The Answer to the Fifth and Sixth Question in the Assemblies Catechism.

" **H**ere is but One Only, the Living and True
" **I** God. There are Three Persons in the
" **G**odhead ; the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy*
" **G**host, and these Three are One God, the same
" in Substance, equal in Power and Glory.

We whose Names are above do heartily Subscribe to that which is above express'd, as what we Believe to be the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, reveal'd in the Holy Scriptures.

*A LETTER of PERSWASION,
to the Non-subscribing Ministers.*

Reverend GENTLEMEN,

FOR that Title of Respect I would fain yet think your due, notwithstanding your strange Conduct lately at *Salters-Hall*, by which you have plainly shewn, that altho' the Peace of our Souls is committed unto you in so solemn a Manner, you discover so little Regard to that Peace, as to refuse to confirm it by a positive Declaration that you are Christians, that is, that you do really Believe in the Blessed *Trinity* ; tho' no more was required by this, than what you were

were obliged to do at your first Admission into the Ministry : This therefore it is that has given us, the honest Plain-meaning Laity, so terrible an Alarm, and has rouzed me in particular to inform you what is expected from you, in order to remove that Disquiet and Scandal which your Conduct has produced. Nor would I have you reject what I shall offer, because it comes from a Lay-man ; as you have refused Signing the *Declaration*, because offered by a Minority, and out of that Order which you make so Essential. For when the Clergy set so light by their Congregations, it is but reasonable that some of those Congregations should put them in Mind of that Duty which they seem to have forgotten, and peremptorily Demand Satisfaction in this Particular.

But because some of your Champions have in Print insinuated, that this *Declaration* was without any just or important Ground ; give me leave to recapitulate and give the Matter of Fact, as I find it in the Accounts published on both Sides ; from whence not only the Importance, but the Necessity of some Declaration on this Head will manifestly appear to every Man that shall think of it without Prejudice or Prepossession.

X Two or three Ministers of *Exeter* had advanced such Notions against the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as made their Congregations depart from them, and refuse to be any farther joined with Men of such Principles. But that they might not do any thing rashly and on their own Heads, they directed Letters to their Brethren in *London*, for their Advice in this Particular ; but with this express Caution, That this Advice be sent by such Ministers as shall sufficiently convince them that they are for the Doctrine of the *Trinity* ; since their Ministers at *Exon*, and their Partizans, had insinuated,

insinuated, that almost all the Teachets among the *Dissenters* were of their Opinion. Accordingly, a Meeting of all the Divines of the three Denominations, in and about London, were Summoned to Meet together at *Salters-Hall*: Where being met, the Subscribing Ministers propose, as a necessary Preliminary to those Advices which they were afterwards to give those distracted Churches of the West, ‘That every Member should Subscribe a Declaration, That they did firmly Believe the Doctrine of the Blessed *Trinity*, in the very same Sense in which all the Reformed Churches in the World did Believe it. To this End, the Subscribing Divines did not make choice of any new Words of their own, but of those which are found in the *First Article* of the Church of *England*, and the Answer to this Question in the *Assemblies Catechism*: Which they did, because they could not imagine that there could be one Minister among them which should make a Scruple of the very Words which they had already Subscribed (as I have observed) at their Admission to the Ministerial Function.

This is the true State of the Case: And as the Necessity of this Subscription plainly appears in this, that, without it, it would be to no manner of Purpose to proceed to draw up any Advices; since those, who were to receive those Advices, had declared, they wou'd receive none, but from such as should give sufficient Testimony of their not being infected with Arianism, or any Anti-Trinitarian Notion. And the only way to do this, the Subscribing Divines justly supposed, was to make use of Words that were Plain and Positive, and incapable of Evasion.

The Non-subscribing Ministers, on the contrary, tho' they seem'd satisfy'd, that a Declaration of

their Faith in the *Trinity*, was a necessary Preliminary to the Advices they were to give, would not agree that this Declaration should be made in any Words but those of the Holy Scriptures. Gentlemen, you must pardon me, that I arrest your Confession of the Necessity of such a Declaration; for if it be necessary, as you seem to grant by your Proceedings, it is equally necessary that it should be in such Words as should be satisfactory to the Persons for whom you design'd it, otherwise it must be to them as no Declaration at all.

It is very well known, that the *Arians*, *Socinians*, and *Unitarians*, as they call themselves, in Opposition to *Trinitarians*, do allow all those Texts of Scriptures, which we, who are for the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, do quote to prove it: It is therefore not the Words of the Text that can make the Distinction between us, but the Sense and Meaning that each Side does put upon those Words, that can be sufficient Evidence to prove that any Man is for or against the *Trinity*, in the receiv'd common Sense of that Word. Which is sufficient to shew, that the *Non-Subscribers*, tho' they allowed the Necessity of the Declaration, was resolved, however, not to comply with that Necessity.

Thus much for the Necessity of the Declaration; I shall next say a few Words as to its Importance: Though, indeed, having prov'd the Necessity of it, it would seem too superfluous, were we to deal with Men of an unbias'd Reason and a Christian Compassion; but since our Adversaries seem more eminent for their Obsturacy than Reason, I shall add a Consideration or two upon this likewise.

First, It seems to me Important; because our *London* Ministers had been mis-represented to our Country Brethren as *Arians*: And sure, Gentlemen, you will think, that to clear your selves from this Imputation

putation with two or three Congregations, is Important enough to engage your utmost Care and Caution. But,

Secondly, When this Notion of your Guilt, in this Particular, was not confin'd to two or three Congregations, but industriously, by the Malice and Policy of your Enemies, spread not only all over this Town, but almost all over the Nation, it was certainly of the highest Importance, that you should take care to give the World the highest Evidence that you were not guilty of this Imputation; if, at least, you think, that the Vindication of so illustrious a Body, as that of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, from so foul an Accusation, be of any Importance; which can only be done by such a Declaration as has been sign'd by the worthy Ministers whom ye have been pleased to oppose.

Gentlemen, you must excuse me, if I should seem to urge this Matter a little too close upon you, since Christianity it self is so much concern'd in it: I must therefore tell you, that we of the Laity are under some Apprehension, that under the specious Pretence of an Honour paid to the BIBLE, you seem to conceal your real Sentiments, and give us but too much Suspicion that the best of our Enemies were but too well grounded, since so many Ministers among us have but too manifestly in this Affair acted for their Cause. Gentlemen, if you are really in your Hearts for the *Arian* Doctrine, if you are so unhappy as to be fallen in to that detestable Heresy; be so Honest, at least, as plainly to own it, that we may know our Friends from our Foes; defend your Cause openly and fairly, avow your Principles in their own Colours; for then we may pity your Misfortune, and convince by our Arguments, and endeavour to convert by

our Prayers so many unhappy Persons from so foul an Error: But whilst you conceal your Principles, and daub over so notorious a Defection by seeming still to remain among us, you can merit nothing but our Detestation of your Hypocrisy. It would, I confess, be a very melancholy Prospect, to behold so many Learned Men falling from the Faith; but yet it would be a less melancholy Prospect, than to see so many Enemies of our most Holy Faith Carest in our Bosoms, and Teaching in our Pulpits, as well as Propagating privately amongst us a Doctrine destructive of our Common Christianity. O God! What a miserable Condition are your poor Congregations in, when they must always either be upon their Guard, perpetually entertaining a Suspicion of their Teachers; or else, by a too easy Credulity, and too strong an Opinion of their Veracity, swallow down that fatal Poyson, against which, by their Duty, they ought to furnish them with an Antidote!

There are three Reasons remaining, which furnish strong Suspicion of the Insincerity of your Intention, and which are never to be found in a good Cause, nor made use of by any Defenders of such Cause. The first is, your Falsification of Matter of Fact, which has been publickly prov'd upon you. The next is, your Contrivance of gaining a Majority, by the Assistance of such who had no Right to be so much as present at your Debates, which has likewise been prov'd upon you. The third Reason is, the personal Reflections, the odious Sarcasms, conjured up to blacken the Character of your active Opponent: This is very evident in one of your most Eloquent Defenders, where he digresses into a very clumsy Abuse of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Bradbury, which is of no manner of Use to the Validity of your Argument, and serves only

only to vent your Malice ; for what signifies it whether Mr. Bradbury be a pleasant Companion, or a sow'r, morose, ill-humour'd Person: No Man in the World, that ever I knew, excluded an innocent Mirth from true Religion ; and even your Advocate does not so much as pretend, that this Reverend Gentleman's Good-humour is ever criminal. He does, indeed, not only not like a Christian, but not so much as like a Gentleman or an honest Man, give villanous Innuendo's, as if Mr. Bradbury was too fond of the Bottle ; but that is too plain a piece of Malice to need any Confutation. Your Cause must be very bad indeed, when it forces you to have recourse to so abandon'd a thing as Scandal for its Support, and fit only for the wretched Scribblers of Lampoons. If, in Answer to this, there has been any thing offer'd not so severely serious as this Dispute requires, you must remember that you were the Aggressors ; you began to throw Dirt, and cannot wonder at any Man's Endeavour to secure himself from the Filth.

These are the three Reasons that confirms me in my Suspicion of the Insincerity of both what you have said and done, and heightens my Fears, that notwithstanding all your Pretences, you are Against, and not For us ; that you are *Arians*, or the like, and not *Trinitarians*, though you have not had the Courage and Honesty to say so in express Words. If I injure you in this Opinion, I have a great many Partners in the Guilt ; but we do promise publickly to ask your Pardons when you shall give sufficient Proof, by your Subscribing the Declaration, that we have done you any Injustice : But there is no other Way possible either to do your selves Right, or remove that Scandal which you have given the World. I would have you remember, that this is not imposing a Creed upon

upon you, but only a Desire that you wou'd let us know plainly, and without any Equivocation, what your belief is in this Particular, and in what Sense you take the Words of the Holy Scriptures, from whence we deduce the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, according to the First Article of the Church of England, and the Answers in the Assemblies Catechism. If you refuse this, you do plainly tell us, that you will not, for the Satisfaction of all the World, let us know your real Sentiments on this Point; which is sufficient to justify all that can be laid to your Charge. Let me recommend to you one Text of Scripture, *It is necessary that Scandal should be: but wo to them by whom it shall come,* Mat. xviii. 7. As therefore you would avoid this Wo pronounced by our Blessed Saviour, in time remove that Scandal which you have already given, by Subscribing the Declaration: Which is the hearty Wish and Prayer of,

Your humble Servant, &c.

These be the NAMES of the Non-subscribing Ministers.

Fos. Oldfield, D. D. Moderator, p. r.

John Sheffield,

John Billingsley,

William Harris,

Simon Brown,

John Evans,

John Hughes,

Thomas Sleigh,

John Savage,

Samuel Wright,

Benjamin Grosvenor,

John Ratcliff,

Samuel Rosewell,

Joseph Jenkins,

Moses Lowman,

Joseph Burroughs,

John Ingram,

Thomas

Thomas Leavesly,	Edward Bearne,
George Smyth,	Samuel Chandler,
Lewis Douglas,	William Sheffield,
Benja. Avery, L. L. D.	Nathanael Hodges,
Joseph Baker,	Robert Billio,
Ben. Andrews Atkinson,	Thomas Skater,
Gabriel Barber,	James Read,
Nathanael Lardner,	Henry Read,
William Facomb,	William Hocker, jun.
Samuel Savage,	Richard Biscoe,
Samuel Highmore,	Joseph Benner,
Robert Lamb,	Richard Parker,
Amos Harrison,	Samuel Oldfield,
John Bradley,	John Cambden,
Samuel Clark,	Nathanael Foxwell,
Daniel Burgess,	John Conder,
John Cornish,	Thomas Simmons,
Thomas Newman,	David Jennings,
Quintus Naylor,	John Eaton,
John Sherman,	Obadiah Hughes,
Jeremiah Hunt,	Arthur Shaller,
Samuel Baker,	Richard Tuddeman,
Thomas Petken,	E. Roscoe,
John Gale, D. P.	James Richardson,
Isaac Kimber,	Matthew Randal,
Clerk Oldsworth,	William Bush,
Richard Rigby, M. D.	Christopher Tayler,
Thomas Kerby,	Thomas Cotton.

A LETTER to the Reverend
Mr. John Conder, on his Signing
on Both Sides.

Reverend SIR,

ICANNOT CONCLUDE without a WORD or two to your Self, whose Conduct has been very surprisingly particular in this grand Debate which has so unhappily Divided the Reverend Body of our Ministers. You seem to aim at a Thing which never can be obtained, the Reconciling of Opposites, and of the Two Different Parties, center in Mr. *John Conder* for your Name we find in Both the Printed Lists; and either Side claim you as their own, because you have set your Name to the Opinion of each Side. Perhaps you imagine by that, that you shall at least be in the Right by One of them. This Way of making Sure, was practised by a certain Physician within these twenty Years, who, to make sure Work, as he imagined, on his Death-bed had the Prayers of the Church of *England* read to him by a Protestant Minister, and the Extreme Unction of the Papists administered to him by a Popish Priest. In the same manner there was one of the *Saxon* Kings of our Hetharchy, who, upon hearing the Gospel of *Christ* preached, set up an Altar to *Christ* by the Altar of his former God. So these two Instances seem to bear some Parallel to what you have done. But tho' they might seem to make sure of the Truth

Truth on one Side ; it is plain, that Doubt was the Motive of their Actions, that they were not Fix'd in either Opinion, but Wavering between both. The same, I am afraid, will hold good in your Self : For if you had been fully satisfy'd that the Subscribing Ministers were in the Right, and for that reason Subscribed with them to the Declaration, it is impossible that you could ever have thought of joining your Name to those who were of a contrary Opinion ; for that will be reconciling Truth and Error, as giving the same Testimony to both.

Not to multiply Words, or put a worse Face on the Matter, than is consistent with that good Character which you have in the World ; I am willing to believe, that what you have done, has only been a Work of Supererogation in Christian Charity, and an inconsidering Desire to Unite the Brethren, whose Disunion might, perhaps, give you so much Uneasiness. But, Reverend Sir, this Conduct of your's could not afford you, in Reason, any such valuable Prospect. For while you discover'd such an Inconsistency in your Opinion, you could not hope to have any great Influence upon either Side. Halting between two Opinions, is what should never fall in with the Character of a Teacher : For how can he direct a Congregation, who wanders himself in the Wiles of Uncertainty ? What Dependance can a Congregation have upon a Preacher who does not so much as know his own Mind ? In short, we of the Laity expect that our Teachers should be of more fix'd and certain Principles : And since you have, by your Conduct, given us Offence, we hope you will have so much Regard to

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your

your Self, as to let us know what your Real and Positive Opinion is in these Affairs, or Justifie what you have done, with Reasons so clear and evident, as may remove all our Doubts, and prove that you have acted like an Honest and Good Christian : Which that you may, is the Hearty Wish of,

Your Humble Servant,

The L A Y - M A N.

F I N I S.

